5 P. M.

ANNOUNCEMENT RE. GOVERNMENT BUSINESS FOR THE WEEK COMMENCING 21ST JULY, 1986

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU): Now, I request Shri Sitaram Kesri to make a statement on Government Business.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, with your permission I rise to announce that Government Business in this House during the week commencing 21st July, 1986, will consist of:—

1. Consideration and passing of:

(a) The Indian Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 1986.

(b) The Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill, 1986.

(c) The Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill, 1986.

2. Consideration and passing of the following Bills; as passed by Lok Sabha:—

(a) The Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 1985.

(b) The Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Bill, 1985.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

I. COLLAPSE OF MANDOVI BRIDGE NEAR PANAJI; GOA

THE VICE CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU): Now statement by Shri Rajesh Pilot.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Sir, with heavy heart, I regret to inform the Hon'ble Members of the House that two spans of bridge across Mandovi river on N.H. 17 near Panaji, Goa have collapsed at about 8.20 hrs. on the 5th July, 1986. As reported by the Government of Goa, Daman and Diu this accident had unfortunately resulted in loss of two lives and injury to one person. One person is also reported to be missing. The injured person later on died in the hospital. This was one of the first bridges of cantil-ever type constructed in our country and commissioned to traffic in 1970.

The bridge is located in marine environment. When damages to parts of the superstructure were reported by Goa Government in September, 1985, the problem of corrosion was noticed. Load restrictions of 20 Tons and speed restriction of 25 Km. per hour were imposed on all vehicles using the bridge. As a matter of fact, a high level Technical Committee had been constituted by the Government of Goa on 1st October, 1985 on the request of Government of India to ascertain the causes of distress, to suggest remedial measures and to advise whether it is possible to minimise the rate of further deterioration of the bridge till the final remedial measures are implemented. The Committee had observed that loss of prestress had occurred in many prestressing cables of the superstrueture due to corrosion and had been examining various types of remedial measures based on detailed testing and investigations. On the basis of their interim recommendations, the Government had sanctioned in May 1986 an estimate amounting to Rs. 29.5 lakhs for repair on experimental basis of three spans identified as the most distressed ones.

Government of Goa have already filed an FIR under Section 304-A of IPC. They have also announced holding of a judicial enquiry. The Ministry has decided to constitute a Body of Experts to examine the feasibility of rehabilitating the existing bridge.

We are fully aware of the inconvenience being caused to the travelling public because of disruption of traffic and arrangements for ferry have already been made which is proposed to

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be further augmented to mitigate the hardship to the public. The Goa Government is in touch with Army Authorities to explore the construction of a Pontoon bridge. Though traffic is being diverted via Ponda involving a detour of about 45 kms. We propose to keep the diverted route in traffic-worthy condition till a new bridge is constructed.

I am to inform the House that in view of the increasing volume of traffic passing over the existing bridge the Ministry had already made a provision for construction of a new bridge in the Seventh Five-Year Plan and an estimate for its survey and investigations has already been sanctioned on the 31st March, 1986. In view of the collapse of the bridge, emergent steps are being taken to expedite construction of a new bridge.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Karnataka): Sir, this is a very unfortunate incident. I agree. Sir, what I do not agree is the statement of the Minister, his playing down the causes for the collapse of this bridge. He has merely said in the statement that this bridge was one of the first bridges of cantilever type constructed in our country and commissioned to traffic in 1970. This itself should have given the bridge durability, stability and strength because cantilever type is considered to be one of the best devices in constructing the bridge. Therefore, this type of bridge should have got longevity. On the other hand, this bridge has collapsed. That shows the bridge was not constructed properly and while construction was undertaken, it was not supervised by competent staff, by technical staff. It also means that this bridge was constructed by sub-standard material and there was lot of corruption in the construction of this bridge. All these things are there as a result of which the bridge could not sustain itself for long and it collapsed.

Sir, this is a sad commentary on our engineers and a new bridge will take quite a long time to come up. The Minister has not given us any information about that as to when a new bridge is going to be constructed and whether this bridge is going to be constructed within a period of one or two years? I do not know anything about it. As a matter of fact, construction takes a long time. I would like to know whether a time scheduled has been drawn up for this purpose; whether the Government of Goa has been told about this and whether the people have got to use the round-about route for a long time ? Therefore, I would like the Minister to throw some light on this as to when there is going to be bridge at all again. Whether the same type of bridge is going to be constructed or some different type of bridge will be constructed? I would like to know whether any compensation was given to those people who have suffered and if not, I would like the Minister to give compensation to the victims of the bridge collapse. I would also like to know whether any steps have been taken to suspend some of the people, officials, engineers who are responsible for the construction of the bridge because enquiry will go on for a long time. I would like the Minister immediately to take action against those officials who are directly responsible for the construction of this bridge and what action has been taken by him.

श्री बी. सत्यनारायण रेड्डी (आन्ध्र-प्रदेश) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, 5 जुलाई को मांडवी नदी पर ब्रिज कोलेप्स होने की घटना बहुत ही दर्दनाक और दूरुदायी है । मंत्री महोदय ने अपने बयान के पैराग्राफ 2 में जो बताया है इसको पढ़ने के बाद यह पता चलता है कि इसमें जो खराबी थी वह पहले से ही गोआ की सरकार ने भारत सरकार को बता दी थी। इसके बावजूद यह हुआ। एक टेक्निकल कमेटी की रिपोर्ट के बावजूद सरकार नेकोई ऐसा कदम नहीं उठाया, ऐसा कोई कार्य नहीं किया जिससे कि

इस दुर्घटना को होने से बचाया जा सके। इससे साफ-साफ सरकार की लापरवाही, नेग्लिजेंस और इसमें आंख मूंद कर इन सारी चीजों पर कोई ध्यान नहीं जाने का सबूत मिलता है।

इसके लिए भारत सरकार जिम्मेदार है इस दुर्घटना के लिए।

इसकी जो टैक्नीकल कमेटी ने भी अपनी रिपोर्ट दी है उसके बावजूद कोई ऐसा काम आपने तुरन्त नहीं लिया है।

तो मैं सरकार से जानना चाहूंगा कि देश के अंदर न सिर्फ मांडवी नदी, बल्कि देश के अंदर दूसरे भी कई ऐसे ब्रिजेज हैं, जहां पर खतरा हो सकता है क्योंकि इसमें जिस मैटीरियल का इस्तेमाल किया गया है, वह बहुत ही फरसूदा मैटीरियल होगा, जो कांट्रैक्टर्ज हैं ठेकेदार हैं, यह सारा पैसा खा जाते हैं और इसमें खराब मैटीरियल लगाया जाता है।

इसके लिए भारत सरकार कोई ऐसी मशीनरी तैयार करे जिससे कि ऐसी दुर्घटना आगे न हो और ऐसे जो ब्रिजेज देश के अंदर जगह-जगह पर बने हैं, ऐसे कितने इसकी कोई जानकारी सरकार को है या नहीं ?

वे जो दुर्घटना हुई है गोआ में मांडवी नदी के ब्रिज पर, तो सरकार ने कोई जांच बिठाई है---उन्होंने कहा कि जुडिशली इन्क्वायरी के लिए उन्होंने आर्डर दिया है। तो सिर्फ जुडिशल इन्क्वायरी ही नहीं, बल्कि जो सारा यह मामला हुआ है, उसके बारे में और जितने कांट्रैक्टर्ज इस ब्रिज को बनाने वाले हैं, दूसरे ऐसे कौन से कांट्रैक्ट्स हैं, जो इस ठेकेदार के जिम्मे दिये गये हैं ? हमको पता चला है कि गोआ के अंदर दूसरा कोई अहम प्रोजैक्ट इसी कान्ट्रैक्टर को दिया गया है।

तो इसके बारे में सरकार को कोई इल्म है कि दूसरे ऐसे कोई प्रोजैक्ट्स हैं, जो इस कांट्रैक्टर के जरिए से किये गये हैं ? तो उसके बारे में क्या कार्यवाही की जा रही है और जिन लोगों का इसमें माली और जानी नुकसान हुआ है, उनकी मदद के लिए सरकार ने क्या इंतजाम किया है ?

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO (Jammu and Kashmir): Sir, it is very unfortunate that this accident has taken place and more so when the problem of corrosion was reported by the Government of Goa to the Government of India. What has happened, but I would like to ask one or two questions of the hon. Minister. Number one, I would like to know what is the extent of traffic on this bridge at the present moment. I want to know this because that will give us the magnitude of the problem and the emergency nature of the repairs that are to be done on this bridge. And what does the Government propose to do in that direction? Number two, in view of this collapse, will the Government consider appointing a Standing Inspection Committee which shall inspect all the bridges, not only on the National Highways but also in the States, which are of national importance. Will the hon. Minister consider the appointment of such a Standing Inspection Committee which shall consist of experts, may be even those who have just retired—they can also be included—and which will give expert advice regarding the state of the bridges not only on the National Highways but also in the States which are of national importance? Will he kindly give us the assurance? Lastly, I would reiterate the question which has already been raised, the question of compensation to be paid to the victims.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, as I have said in the beginning when I made the statement, it is very unfortunate that this accident has taken place. Hon. Members have raised two or three very prominent points.

One is regarding the design, as Shri Gurupadaswamy has mentioned. This was the idea of the Government, too, when this design was selected. The story of this bridge is that this bridge was with the State Government. In 1964 when this bridge was given for

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construction, it was with the State Highways. The Central Government did not have any link with the construction, did not have any involvement in it. It was totally a State Government affair. In 1970 it was commissioned. Till that time it remained with the State Highways; it was connected with the State Government. In 1972 the road connecting this bridge was declared a national highway and this bridge has fallen within the jurisdiction of the Central Government. When in 1982 it was pointed out that some cracks were seen at one or two places in the bridge, immediate action was taken by the State Government in consultation with the Central Government; some repairs were carried out. Again in 1985 some where in September very prominent cracks were noticed. We appointed a technical committee—as I have said in my statement—in consultation with the Government of Goa, Diu and Daman. They recommended a temporary measures that a load of not more than 20 tonnes should be allowed and the traffic should be restricted to a speed of 25 kmph. All these things were followed.

Then the honourable Member asked about compensation. The subject falls under the jurisdiction of the State Government. But I am told that they have given Rs. 25,000 to each of dead person's family.

Members spoke about the action taken. The incident took place on the 5th. On the 7th I flew to Goa myself. I visited the site and held consultations with the State Government officials. The honourable Chief Minister was also there. We from the Central Government advised the State Government that this was an incident which would hurt the feelings of every citizen in the country and we cannot afford to leave any stone unturned till the culprits are caught. We advised the State Government that an FIR should be lodged against those officials who were involved in sanctioning the bridge, those officials who were involved in designing the bridge, those involved in executing the bridge and an FIR should be lodged also against the contractors who had done the job. Even the people who have retired should be taken to task if they are found guilty. Strict action has also been advised against the people involved in the maintenance of the bridge. Accordingly they have filed an FIR under 304. As I mentioned in my statement, let me assure the House that we will not leave any efforts on our part to trace the culprits wherever they are, wherever a wrong steps has been taken, whoever is the individual concerned The same firm is also being given a big project for construction of a dam. I am told the Chief Minister has been informed and he has taken the necessary action in the interests of the State. For the time being we have asked the Chief Minister to arrange some more ferries. The traffic on this bridge is very heavy; roughly 80,000 to 1,00,000 people cross the bridge everyday; roughly 4,000 vehicles cross the bridge. It is a very high density traffic bridge. We have advised the State Government to buy some more ferries. The Central Government is trying to help financially. In the meantime the Army has been contacted and we have asked them to make a design for a Pontoon bridge. About the new bridge, this would be completed within two to three years. Regarding the design, as I have mentioned, an expert committee has been appointed to go into it and to ensure that the failures that have happened earlier do not occur again. We have issued instructions to all the States to check all their bridges and report back to the Central Government within fortyfive days.

[**Mr. Deputy Chairman** in the Chair.]

But again I have to point out that bridges fall under the jurisdiction of the State Governments and we can only advise the State Governments.

But I do share the feelings of the honourable Members who have spoken but at this juncture I will not be able to go into the details as to whether the material was wrong or the design was wrong, and so on. The experts are looking into the details of the matter. A judicial inquiry has been ordered. Let me assure the House once again that the Government will do its best to have the investigation carried out properly and will not spare anyone who is found guilty.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: I have asked not only about this bridge. In view of the collapse of this bridge, I have asked whether the Government is taking necessary steps in regard to other such bridges in other parts of the country where such bridges have been constructed. I would like to know whether any such bridges are in a dilapidated condition and, if so, what action the Central Government has taken in this regard. This question he has not answered earlier.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: I have already clarified that we have issuued instructions to all the State Governments to check their bridges. As far as the design of the bridge, of this bridge, is concerned, this was the only design on a National Highway which was of the cantilever type. This was the only bridge and this was the first bridge of the cantilever type which was constructed on a National Highway.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI (Karnataka): How many such cantilever bridges are there in the country?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: I have already made it very clear that this is the only bridge on the National Highway. I cannot give the information with regard to such bridges which are elsewhere. I have said that this is the first and the only such bridge on a National Highway.

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: What is the expected life of such a bridge?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think this will be enough. We will now go on to the next item. The External Affairs Minister is to make a statement now. Yes, Mr. Shiv Shanker.

II. Recent Chinese intrusion into Indian territory

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): Sir, Hon'ble Members are by now aware of the Chinese intrusion in the Sumdorong Chu valley area of Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh. In mid-June 1986, it was learnt that about 40 Chinese personnel, some in uniform, had intruded approximately 2-3 Kms. as the crow flies into the area of the Sumdorong Chu valley, when our graziers had been going peacefully without any interference. After verification of the intrusion, we protested strongly to the Chinese sion, we protested strongly to the Chinese Government on 26th June, 1986. We stressed that the area of the Sumdorong Chu valley is clearly South of the McMohon Line and well within Indian territory. We rejected the Chinese response received on 8th July, 1986 that this was a disputed area and on their side of the McMohon Line. As the Hon'ble Members are aware, the McMahon Line constitues the internotiional boundary in this sector. The Chinese have conveyed that the matter could be discussed "intensively" at the forthcoming 7th Round of Official Level Talks in Beijing. We propose to do so.

In our Official Level Talks with the Chinese, which commenced in 1981, both sides had accepted the principle that peace and traquility should be maintained along the border and that any problem that arose should be solved through friendly consultations. With both sides having accepted this principle, we on our part have consistently endeavoured to settle such problems through discussions. We are, therefore, surprised that the Chinese should have intruded into our territory in this manner. I would like to inform the Hon'ble Members that we are keeping a close watch on the situation. We are conscious of the concern of the Hon'ble Members on this issue and shall take the House in confidence whenever such an occasion arises.